

ORCA NewsLetter

Oakland Radio Communication Association
Oakland, California

The next meeting will be on the first Saturday, April 4th, 9:00 AM at Fire Station #1, Media Room,
1605 Martin Luther King at 17th Street, Oakland.

Special points of interest:

- Earth-Venus-Earth
Amateur Signals - pg 3
- Volunteering for Public
Service Events - pg 2

Net Control

- April 02: David **WB6NER**
- April 09: Tom **KG6MAC**
- April 16: Adele **KE6HKY**
- April 23: Karen **KG6ADB**
- April 30: Mike **KB6MP**
- May 05: Selma **KG6SXJ**

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President's Corner

It is with sadness that I notice that increasing numbers of new print newspapers are biting the dust, victims of lower revenues and higher internet speeds. Gone are the days of gigantic headlines shouting the latest news in "Extra" editions. Why wait for the newspaper when you can Twitter and IM the breaking news at breakneck speeds. I must admit I discontinued my subscription a while back although I really enjoy the feel and substance of the Real McCoy. One of the reasons I enjoy the paper is the New York Times crossword puzzle. It gave me a chance to try to hone the gray matter in the AM. Got to be pretty good at them as a matter of fact. But there is an equally fun way to attempt to keep sharp and that is to listen and copy CW transmissions. You don't even have to join in on the fun although I do at every chance.

Looking back at my paper log for the last 3 weeks or so I can see a great variety of "conversations". One was an impromptu "conference" with 3 members of the San Joaquin Net. Another was from Oleg who was transmitting Marine Mobile from the Arctic Ocean. His copy was solid and deft for such frigid climes. I had a brief QSO with a station beaming from Indonesia. And the Japanese signals in the early AM are numerous and strong.

Just the other day I "eavesdropped" on a QSO

between 2 W0 stations, both of which I had had contact with in the past. As I wrote the script these lines came out "2 feet of new snow", "the wind blew so bad", "that will be a big flood", "the temp is 17", "the snow is not melting but it was wet when it came down and is turning to ice on the road", "disaster area, spring farming will halt," and finally, "this will be one for the books". Wow! That was the storm in North Dakota we all read about the next day! And here I was, transcribing the description from one who was there! Talk about fast news! EXTRA EXTRA!

The other station, who was not in that affected area, responded, saying he had made a breakfast of pancakes and sausage and it was good! The first station came back and said he would work on his taxes that day. Now there is a real dilemma-face freezing flood waters and ice filled roads, or struggle with your taxes. As Jack Benny might have said, "I am THINKING about it!"

On the local CW front Doug, KI6BZT, and I have set up an informal CW net on 2 meters. No stress and no pressure, just practice and QRS at will. No fear of being blown away by Texas Tower Power signals. It is a lot of fun and anyone who wants to join in is more than welcome! No set times as of yet but that could be a possibility in the future. I will keep you posted.

Field Day is approaching

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ORCA Calendar - April 2009

4th - Monthly Meeting
24th - 26th - Visalia International DX Convention
25th - CORE - Citywide Emergency Response Functional Exercise
25th - MS Walk, Alameda
26th - ORCA/EBARC/ARCA VE Session - 9am at Oakland EOC

President's Corner (Continued from page 1)

and the gears are turning but not fully meshed yet. There are still a couple of I's to dot and T's to cross but we should have the paper work in order in plenty of time. There will be plenty of opportunity for all ORCA members to help and participate. By the way Field Day is June 27-28, 2009, so keep your datebooks open! More details will be forthcoming in NewsLetters, nets, and meetings to come!

73, Dave **AE6PX**

ARES Exercise Commentary

Commentary from KI6EWP, WB6NER & KS6M

Thank you, John, KS6M, Karen, KG6ADB, Michael, KI6TYV Selma, KG6SXJ, Suzanne, KI6VLJ and David, WB6NER for your hard work on the March 19 COCO & ALCO Mass Prophylaxis 2009 exercise. With minimal planning and documentation you were able to get us set up and on the air and providing a valuable communication's link between a large joint-operations site at the Oakland Coliseum and the Oakland EOC. John, **KI6EWP**

Repeater based communications at the Oakland EOC were perfectly normal. Surprisingly, we found that simplex communications on Channel 3 to be very clear and reliable at a variety of wattage powers from the field. We surmise that this was highly dependent on the location of the field radio operators at the Coliseum. We avoided simultaneous use of two simplex transmitters on the same band, and had no radio conflicts.

Our most significant challenge was to simulate best as possible how to copy and respond to the exercise messages provided by field radio operators. As there was no EOC exercise staffing, we had to invent responses out of "thin air" which subtracts from the experience somewhat, but also illustrates the importance of gaining skills with handling messages. We should spend some training time with the ARES/RACES group at large developing message protocols and culture.

David, **WB6NER**

We established our station at the Coliseum, including a directional antenna from John KI6EWY atop an indoor mast and pointed through the window connected to a base rig capable of up to 65 watts, but we found that we could easily reach the repeater and the EOC on simplex with an HT and standard antenna at low power. We used the base rig at 5 watts output, powered by a 7 amp-hour battery, to pass traffic. We were fortunate to be at a window facing both the repeater and (for simplex traffic) the EOC itself. We cannot extrapolate from our experience to a situation in which the station had to face another direction or was not near a window at all. We established an open tactical net on UHF simplex for our own use within the Coliseum structure.

During the exercise, we were given five written messages addressed to Oakland EOC or some functional area within it. Sharing duties at the station, we passed

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Volunteering for Public Service Events

Are you looking at ways to improve your communications skills? Afraid to jump into the deep end of the pool by working a real event? My presentation at the April 4th Meeting will give you pointers on choosing a Public Service event.

Learn why these events are such an important aspect of Amateur Radio, face our fears about volunteering, and decide which events are right for you.

Mike, **KB6MP**

...And a follow up...

This month's meeting program will focus on public service events. They are an excellent opportunity to get some real world operating experience in a, usually, low stress environment and to give back to the community. By happy coincidence, right around the corner is one of ORCA's traditional public service opportunities, the Alameda MS Walk on Saturday, April 25th at Crown Memorial Park in Alameda.

For too many years to count (okay, I confess I just can't figure out how many), ORCA has taken the lead in providing amateur radio support to the staff that puts on the charity walk benefiting Multiple Sclerosis research and education. Recently, we have made a concerted effort to use it as a field training event as well. First, we organize our support using Incident Command System (ICS) principles, including making assignments to standard ICS positions, like Leader of the Communications Unit and Supervisors of geographic operating Divisions (Rest Stop I, SAG wagon, etc.). And there is always a Safety Officer.

Then we work on our ARES/RACES training to get the day started, with a Resource Net run by Resource Net Control and transfers to the Tactical Net as appropriate. Next, we set up a complete field VHF operating station, our own mini-Field Day exercise. One year we even used solar power to provide a constant trickle charge to the battery powering our rig. If the weather is inclement, we are prepared (best practices hint: check that day's forecast). We provide whatever communications backbone the event organizers require. To be honest, there isn't always a lot of message traffic, but that doesn't stop us from practicing our on the air skills, as Tactical Net Control usually keeps the frequency active. More recently, as our education program has taken off, we have encouraged new Hams to join us, and we pair an experienced operator with a new Ham so they can get a flavor of what we do and some time on the air.

Finally, we have fun. The people who put this on are good people, and always have food and drink and other treats for us, along with all the other volunteers. We learn, we do community service and, if the weather cooperates, we have a nice morning at the beach. If you are interested in joining us this year, talk to this year's Incident Commander, John Artim, KI6EWY.

Bob, **KE6IUE**

ORCA Calendar 2009-2010

ARES Exercise

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May

2nd - Monthly Meeting
1st-3rd - EMCOMMWEST 2009 - Reno, Nevada
3rd - Grizzly Peak Century

June

6th - Monthly Meeting
13th - 14th - ARRL VHF QSO Party
27th - 28th - Field Day - Setup on PM Friday, the 26th

July

4th - 5th Fire Patrol - Patrol times & routes to be confirmed
11th - 12th - IARU HF World Championship
28th - Board Meeting - Place & time to be confirmed
26th - ORCA/EBARC/ARCA VE Session - 9am at Oakland EOC

August

1st - Monthly Meeting
1st - 2nd - ARRL UHF Contest
4th - National Night Out
15th - 16th - ARRL 10 GHz and Up Contest

September

12th - Monthly Meeting - 2nd Saturday due to Labor Day Holiday
12th - 13th - ARRL VHF QSO Party
19th - 20th ARRL 10 GHz and Up contest
29th - Board Meeting

October

3rd - Annual Meeting - Elections to Board
3rd - 4th - CA QSO Party
25th - ORCA/EBARC/ARCA VE Session
28th - Board Meeting - Place & time to be confirmed

November

7th - Monthly Meeting
7th - SET - Tentative
7th - 8th - ARRL Sweepstakes (CW)
21st - 22nd - ARRL Sweepstakes (Phone)

December

4th - 6th - ARRL 160 Meter Contest
5th - Monthly Meeting
9th or 16th- Holiday Dinner - To be discussed/decided
12th - 13th - ARRL 10 Meter Contest

—2010—

January

9th - Monthly Meeting - 2nd Saturday due to New Years Holiday
24th - ORCA/EBARC/ARCA VE Session - 9am at Oakland EOC

February

6th - Monthly Meeting

March

6th - Monthly Meeting

that traffic as well as several replies.

A large part of the value gained was from the discussion among the three of us as we waited for traffic to arrive. Topics included:

- coping with written messages that appear to be ambiguous in meaning or otherwise not well composed;
- which nets one should be checked into and which not be checked into at various points of the deployment and why;
- logging traffic, copying and writing replies, annotating forms, etc.,
- national and local band plans, transceiver factory programming, and the effect of those issues on frequency choice and rig programming (this had to be discussed because our HTs automatically applied a repeater offset to the UHF simplex frequencies in the Communications Plan) .

John, **KS6M**

Radio Amateurs Bounce Signal off Venus

Radio Amateurs have achieved the very first reception of amateur signals bounced off the planet **Venus**, over 50 million km away - **EVE** (Earth-Venus-Earth)

On March 25th, 2009 a team from the German space organisation AMSAT-DL reached another milestone on its way to an own inter-planetary probe towards planet Mars.

The ground station at the Bochum observatory transmitted radio signals to Venus. After travelling almost 100 million kilometers and a round trip delay of about 5 minutes, they were clearly received as echoes from the surface of Venus.

Receiving these planetary echoes is a first for Germany and Europe. In addition, this is the farthest distance crossed by radio amateurs, over 100 times further than echoes from the moon (EME reflections). For receiving the EVE signals, an FFT analysis with an integration time of 5 minutes was used. After integrating for 2 minutes only, the reflected signals were clearly visible in the display. Despite the bad weather, signals from Venus could be detected from 1038UT until the planet reached the local horizon.

The 2.4 GHz high power amplifier used for this achievement is described in the current AMSAT-DL journal.

This represented a crucial test for a final key component of the planned P5-A Mars mission. By receiving echoes from Venus, the ground and command station for the Mars probe has been cleared for operational use and the AMSAT team is now gearing up for building the P5-A space probe.

For more information, go to

<http://forums.qrz.com/showthread.php?t=198334>

By Peter Guelzow **DB2OS**, President, AMSAT-DL



April Meeting: Mike – KB6MP Amateur Radio Service in Civic Events

Monthly events

1st Wednesday	Oakland Digital Net - 7:30 PM 442.400 MHz - PL77
1st Saturday	ORCA General Membership Meeting
1st Sunday	Livermore Swap Meet (closed in winter)
2nd Friday	East Bay Amateur Radio Club
2nd Saturday	Electronics Flea Market in Sunnyvale (closed in winter)
3rd Friday	Hayward Radio Club
3rd Friday	Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club
4th Friday	Amateur Radio Club of Alameda

Amateur Radio Club of Alameda meets 7:00 PM at
431 Stardust Place on Alameda Point.

East Bay Amateur Radio Club meets at 7:30 PM at the
Salvation Army, 4600 Appian Way, El Sobrante.

Hayward Radio Club meets at 7:30 PM 1401 West Winton Ave. in
Hayward behind Hayward Fire Station 6, next to the Hay-
ward Air National Guard Base.

Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club meets at 7:30 PM at
Our Savior Lutheran Church,
1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette.

Weekly Nets

Thursdays 7:30 PM	Oakland ARES/RACES Net 146.88 MHz minus PL 77
Thursdays 7:00 PM	Alameda Emergency Preparedness 146.88 MHz minus PL 77
Thursdays 7:15 PM	NALCO ARES/RACES 440.9 MHz plus PL 131.8
Mondays 7:30 PM	EBARC 10M "Explore Net" 28.425 MHz, USB
Sunday 7:30 PM	VHF NTS Net 145.110 (-) PL82.5

ORCA Officers and Board

President:	Dave Clemes	AE6PX
Vice Pres.:	Paul Bailey-Gates	KA6GEM
Treasurer:	Tom Tazelaar	KG6MAC
Secretary:	David Otey	WB6NER
Director:	Michael Hole	KG6DER
Director:	Karen Harris	KG6ADB
Director:	Art McLaughlin	W6THD
Director:	Elizabeth Brashers	K16JJR
Director:	Jim Tiemstra	K6JAT

Ex-Officio Directors:

ARES Liaison:	Mark Violet	N6RCG
Repeater Trustee:	David Otey	WB6NER
RACES RO:	Per Brashers	K16JJS
WW6OR trustee:	Jim Tiemstra	K6JAT
N6ORC trustee:	Michael Hole	KG6DER

ARRL Pacific Division Officers:

Bob Vallio **W6RGG** - w6rgg@arrl.org
Vice Director: Andy Oppel **N6AJO** - n6ajo@arrl.org
East Bay Section Manager: James Latham **AF6AQ**
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ORCA on the web:
ww6or.com and
groups.yahoo.com/
group/orca_races/

The ORCA NewsLetter is published monthly. Any articles can be used with attribution. **Please submit materials for the next issue by April 23rd to the Editor, David's email address; wb6ner@arrl.net. Thanks again!**